HISTORY

Of the Valiant

ondon 'Prentice.

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THE

HISTORY

OF THE

LONDON 'PRENTICE.

IN Times past there was born in the famous county of Lincoln, a young man of great beauty, promising a great many fine things in his infancy, to promote which, his parents being wealthy, spared nothing to educate and bring him up in the best manner the country afforded; nor did he as he grew in years fail in any thing of their expectations.—— In learning he was well seen, and in many matters; but nothing so inflam'd his mind as the exercising himself in feats of arms, and he was the more incited to it by reading the famous adventures of Knights Errant, how successful they were in overcoming monstrous Giants,

and reſcuing beautiful ladies from death and mifery. And as theſe heroic thoughts

increaſed, ſo he ſaw his ſtrength abound. Nature not ſparing to give him ſtrength according to his limbs, ſo that he in his childiſh encounters, thoſe who ſurpaſſed him in years were not able to reſiſt his force, nor come near him in wreſtling, running, jumping, caſting the bar, ſtone or dart, which made his parents not a little proud of ſuch a bleſſing. They named him Aurelius, as one that promiſed great things.

CHAP. II.

An account of his adventures and enterprizes, where he won the fair Virgin's heart, &c.

WHEN Aurelius was at the age of 14, he went to a wake or merry meeting to recreate himself with other youths of the county, where he so well behaved, that his true courage, activity and beauty gained great applause, and took so well with the virgins, that some of them began to feel a fever in their minds, which Cupid, who at such merry meetings is seldom wanting to promote the business of love, failed not to encrease it, but he as yet not capable of feeling the flame of passion that way, regards not their amorous glances, nor understood the silent language of inflamed hearts, tho' it notwithstanding created him all those enemies that were cautelously jealous of him; they looked on him as a most dangerous rival, and gathered their reason of it from the flatty praises which their mistresses bestowed on him in his absence.

CHAP. III.

How the fair Lucinda fell in love with him and thoſe ſhe diſpiſed how they conſpired againſt him.

OUR youth's ſtrength and beauty increaſing with his years, and continuing as occaſions offered to appear in public; among thoſe admirable virgins that in a manner doated upon him and

wiſhed to be the miſtreſs of his heart, the chief was the fair Lucinda, daughter to a

wealthy ſhepherd; ſhe ſought by many means to oblige him, and make herſelf worthy of a kind glance from the eyes of her valiant hero; but modeſty ſealing his lips, ſhe had no reaſon to think he put conſtructions upon her behaviour agreeable to the deſire of her love-ſick heart; but he purſuing his antagoniſts, plainly ſhew'd his heart was form'd for a ſoldier of Mars, not of Venus, which made her ſigh and grow penſive, refuſing the addreſſes of thoſe who adored her. So ſudden an alteration made them determined to know the cauſe of it, which they ſoon did by a letter ſhe wrote on purpoſe to ſend him, but accidentally dropped it, and which they as accidentally found.—They opened it and read as follows;

AURELIUS,

Seeing you do not underſtand the language of a love-ſick virgin's heart; pardon the liberty of letting you know Lucinda doats upon you——Ah! in return favour with your love, her who for your ſake renounces the reſt of mankind! Oh, Aurelius! have compaſſion, or for ever wretched will be your captive

LUCINDA.

This gives the amoriſts knowledge upon whoſe account they found reception from their beloved miſtreſs, whom they all fear-ed to loſe, bent their ſtudy how to re-move that ſtream that ſtood between them and their happineſs; ſome were of opini-on that nothing but the death of Aurelius could affect it; but others of a milder diſ-poſition declared, that it would not only be too great a cruelty, but bring their own lives in queſtion; therefore conſidering woman kind was generally more taken with the beauty of the body than the ſoul, judg'd fit to deform him by poiſon, but how to get it they knew not, ſo were reſolved to diſfigure his face by wounds, and put an end to the paſſion of Lucinda, which they knew no other way to ex-tinguiſh.

CHAP. IV.

They attempt to deſtroy Aurelius, he overcomes them, and leaves them naked in the wood.

THE plot thus laid againſt our valiant hero, many ways were fought for to put it in practice, till at laſt they un-

derſtood he was to pay a viſit to an [illegible] of his, who lived at a village two miles from his father's houſe, and that he muſt return by a wood. This lucky opportunity, as they imagined it, made them all leap for joy, being three in number, all armed themſelves with miſchievous weapons, and in diſguiſe placed were in ambuſh under ſome trees, in the way he muſt paſs, ſwearing to each other to keep the thing ſecret, though they kept not their oaths, as you ſhall hear; long they had not ſtaid, but as they wiſhed, our valiant youth never dreamed of ſuch treachery came on; but hearing the buſhes ruſtle, he made a halt to ſee what it meant, when out leaped the three lovers, and encompaſſing him, after uſing many terrible words and reviled him, they made it to grapple with him, who ignorant of their intent, and ſcorning to ſtoop for fear, took the two foremoſt in his hands, and by main force brings their heads together, ſo that they wrung like a barber's baſon, ſo being ſtunned by ſuch luſty knocks, after ſtaggering ſome paces, down they fell, and having by this time wreſted a good weapon from one of them, ſets on the other

with such fury and giving them several wounds, and finding the blood run about their ears, fell on their knees and cried for mercy; so did the other two who were recovered from their trance.

They could not obtain his pardon until he had thrash'd 'em into a confession of the whole matter, and thereby became sensible of the love Lucinda bore him, and that she might come to the knowledge of what happened on this occasion and their villany might be rewarded with disgrace, he caused them to unstrip, and with such tackle as their garments afforded he bound them to three several trees stark naked, where these hot brain'd lovers took a cooling all the morning, which discovered the whole intrigue.—This rash valour became for some time the mirth of the country, but most of all it pleased Lucinda, whose favour they lost by the same.

CHAP. V.

How his father put him apprentice to a merchant in London.—He takes his leave of Lucinda.

THE father of young Aurelius having received an exact account of all that

happened, and fearing theſe lovers might ſtudy ſome revenge to repair their diſgrace, as alſo to prevent any amours that might happen between him and Lucinda, to whom he was not willing he ſhould be married, took an opportunity of diſcourſing with him about putting him in a way that would render him capable of living creditably in the world, when finding him pliable, he told him it was his pleaſure he ſhould go to London, and be there put apprentice to ſome honourable emp'oyment, that he might be a comfort to him, wherefore bid him chuſe what employment he would be; he had not long conſidered e'er he replied, that ſeeing it was his pleaſure, he was willing; and for the deſire he had to ſee ſtrange countries he could fancy none ſuperior to a merchant.

To this the old man agrees, and ſhortly after he was ſent up to London, and upon his departure he directed the following letter to Lucinda:

Pardon me, beautious maid, if love, as yet,
No powerful conqueſt o'er me has to get;
That you deſerve whate'er love can beſtow
I do confeſs, but I, alas! muſt go

And wander o'er the worlde 'ere I can love;
Then be content, and for me never grieve.

Subſcribed Aurelius.

This flat denial made the fair Lucinda ſhed many tears and bewail her hard fortune, in loving where ſhe was not repayed with an equal paſſion; but ſoon after a rich farmer's ſon offering ſervice to her, ſhe having with much ſtruggling overcome her former affections, ſhe changed her paſſion, and ſacrificed her virginity to the pleaſure of this new-come lover, where revelling in exceſs of joy we will leave them and follow Aurelius.

CHAP. VI.

How he gained the love of his maſter. Is enamoured with his maſter's fair daughter.

OUR youth upon his trial proved ſo diligent and reſpectful, that it was not long e're he was bound according to the cuſtom of the city, and then doubling his diligence, he won the love of the whole family, neglecting nothing

that might pleaſe, or be for his maſter's intereſt; and what time he had to ſpare he employed in manly exerciſes of re-creating himſelf in the feneing ſchool, and in martial exploits, gaining every where the name of a bold and hardy youth, and one that promis'd great things.

In this happy ſtate he lived near three years, when fickle fortune conſpired to give him ſome diſturbance, for Dorinda his maſter's beautiful daughter, a virgin of about fourteen years of age, return-ing from the ſchool where ſhe had been brought up at board, her modeſty, win-

ning behaviour, and lovely graces, by his too often gazing on, prompted him to admire her,, and by degrees to conceive such a passion for her, that he was no longer master of his heart, which his eyes had given away. A while he smoothered the flame, but in the end it broke out the fiercer, and then he knew experimentally what Lucinda suffered. He attempted to discover his passion, but as often feared to offend, therefore all he could do was to sigh and stand confounded in her presence whilst the innocent lady would frequently ask the reason, but had no answer except what his eyes delivered in burning glances. Thus he continued for a month or more, at the end of which, he resolved one way or other to make his passion known and found an opportunity to drop a letter in the way of the lovely Dorinda.— It contained these words:

Beauteous Dorinda,

After many sighs and eager looks, I have presumed to let you know that I love you dearer than my own life, and to be requited with your love there

is not any thing ſo hazardous that I would not undertake for your ſake; the unequallity I confeſs is great, yet love is a power obedient to no power but its own, pity me then as a lover who loves you above all earthly things, and look not upon me as your father's ſervant but your devoted ſlave; by whoſe ſmiles I live, and without which my life muſt needs be miſerable.

AURELIUS.

This did not a little ſurprize the beauteous maid, who conſider'd that altho' he being as then a ſervant, ſhe

might have cauſe to love him, yet highly diſpleaſing to her parents if ſhe ſhould

countenance his affections, wherefore preferring duty and obediance before her fancy or the paſſion of Aurelius, the next time ſhe met him her words were, That ſhe wondered how he could preſume to make love to her who was his maſter's daughter, e'er half his time was expired, and wiſhed him not to mention it any more by letter or by word, leſt her father were made acquainted of it to his prejudice; and ſo with a kind of ſcornful frown ſhe left him in a maze of grief.

CHAP. VII.

How he got leave to go to Turkey, and what enſued.

AURELIUS being thus repulſed in his firſt love, found himſelf altogether reſtleſs, and that as often as he beheld his beauteous miſtreſs, his torture was more and more augmented; and altho' he tried many ways to ſtop his paſſion, he found them in vain, and therefore concluded unleſs he was removed from the lovely object he muſt

always be miſerable, and perceiving her looks and carriage every day more ſcornful towards him, he requeſted his maſter to let him go to Turkey as his factor in the next [illegible], which requeſt

of his was granted, and ſo he parted from his miſtreſs, whoſe heart ſo much relented as to ſhed ſome tears at his departure.

CHAP. VIII.

How he arrived at Turkey, and of his reception: He overthrows the Turks, and kills a Turkish Prince.

AURELIUS having pass'd the danger of the seas, and landed at Constantinople, where he was received with much respect by the English merchants and factors residing there, and he behaved himself so well in the management of his affairs, that he gained a general esteem; and as his valour was great so was his strength, none being

able to encounter with him. At the marriage of one of the Turk's daughters ſports and ſhows were prepared, the knights ſummoned to exerciſe tilt and tournaments in honor of the ladies. At this entertainment Aurelius reſolved to be, therefore provided himſelf with armour, a horſe, ſword and launch, in his ſhield a gold Phœnix, as a ſubject to a virgin Queen, under it Neptune bridling the ocean, ſhewing that the ſea's

ſovereignty depended on her will; his armour white, ſignifying innocence.

Thus accoutred he waited the ſound of the trumpets, then was the nobility and gentry ſeated, when on a ſudden three Turks richly mounted, armed with mooned ſhields, and with a loud voice bid defiance as the bridegroom champions to all the knights in Chriſtendom. Aurelius tho' enraged waited to ſee their

performance; the Turks were of a large ſize and very expert in arms, throwing their enemies from their ſaddles at the

firſt encounter. Aurelius thinking it time to advance, ſet ſpurs to his horſe, and ſtruck the firſt on the breaſt and threw him heels over head. He forced the ſecond's creſt, that the launce pierced his brain, the third came with his ſword and cut through Aurelius's ſhield but he furiouſly attacked the infidel, made him give ground, and after ſeveral wounds forced him to kneel down and beg for life. The prince ſeeing the Turkiſh champions thus conquered, was enraged, and begg'd leave of his father to ride the ring and challenged this proud hero at ſingle launce, and thereby retrieve the honor loſt, by having three of the moſt valiant champions conquered by the arms of one baſe infidel: But, as ſoon as they met, Aurelius with his launch at one thruſt through his body, drop'd him down dead.

CHAP. IX.

How he deſtroyed two lions prepared to devour him.—The grand Sultan gives him his daughter in marriage.

THE Grand Sultan, upon notice that that Prince Grodam his ſon, whom he thought was only ſtunned, was dead, vow'd that Aurelius who he called the Engliſh infidel, ſhould die the crueleſt death ever man died; and thereupon ſent a ſtrong guard to ſeize and convey him to priſon, until he conſulted what manner of death to put him to, which in the end was, that he ſhould be caſt to two lions, that would be kept faſting for ſeveral days, that they might thereby more greedily devour him.

The day of his death being come, and the king, his nobles, and all the ladies ſeated to behold the execution, the brave Aurelius was brought forth in a ſhirt of cambrick, and drawers of white ſatin embroidered with gold, and a crimſon cap on his head; but had

ſcarce time reſpectively to bow to ladies, who greatly praiſed his manly beauty, and began highly to pity his misfortune, e're the lions were let looſe,

who at the ſight of their prey began to roar horribly, inſomuch that the ſpectators trembled, and behold Aurelius whom death could not daunt as they fiercely came at him with open mouth, he fiercely charged his hands down their throats, and e're they had power to deliver themſelves from his ſtrong arms, forced out their hearts; demanding of the grand Vizer what other

encounter he muſt undergo for the honour of the Engliſh nation, who immediately deſcended from his throne and tenderly embraced him, and begged him

to honor his royal houſe by marrying his daughter, whom he tenderly loved, ſwearing he would be an eternal honour to England, and to the London Prentices.

FINIS.

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